THE PASSING OF HARIDAS THAKURA

from *Sri Chaitanya-Charitamrita, Antya-lila* Chapter 11

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CAST: Narrator, Haridas Thakura, Govinda, Lord Chaitanya, Assembled Devotees.

SCENE ONE

Narrator: All glories to Lord Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu! All glories to Lord Nityananda! All glories to Advaita Prabhu and all glories to all the devotees of Lord Chaitanya! During the last part of Lord Chaitanya's life, He resided at Jagannath Puri along with His personal devotees and enjoyed the congregational chanting of the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra.* In the daytime He chanted, danced and visited the temple of Lord Jagannath. One day, Govinda, the Lord's personal servant, went in great jubilation to deliver the remnants of Lord Jagannath's food to an elderly devotee, Srila Haridas Thakura. Although born in a Muslim family, he was a pure devotee of Lord Krishna and always chanted the Holy Names *Hare Krishna Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna Hare Hare / Hare Rama Hare Rama, Rama Rama Hare Hare.*

Govinda: Haridas, please rise and take your *maha-prasada!*

Haridas: Today I shall fast I have not yet finished my rounds. How then can I eat? But, you have brought *maha-prasada,* so how can I neglect it? **(Haridas offers prayers and eats a morsel of *prasada.* Enter Lord Chaitanya)**

Lord Chaitanya: Haridas, are you well?

Haridas: My body is well, but my mind and intelligence are not.

Lord Chaitanya: Tell Me, what is your disease?

Haridas: My disease is that I cannot finished my rounds.

Lord Chaitanya: Now that you are old, you may reduce the number of rounds that you chant. You are already liberated, and therefore you need not follow the regulative principle so strictly.

Haridas: Dear Lord Gauranga, kindly hear my real plea. I was born into a most degraded family, indeed I am both unseeable and untouchable, but You have accepted me as Your servant. You have delivered me from a hellish condition and raised me to the Vaikuntha platform. My dear Lord, I have had one desire for a very long time. I think that quite soon You will bring to a close Your pastimes within this material world. I wish that You do not show me this closing chapter of Your pastimes. Before that time comes, kindly let my body fall down in Your

presence. I wish to catch Your lotus-like feet and see Your moon-like face. With my tongue I shall chant Your holy name, *"Sri Krishna Chaitanya!"* O most merciful Lord, if, by Your mercy, it is possible – kindly let me give up my body in this way.

Lord Chaitanya: My dear Haridas, Krishna is so merciful that He must execute whatever you desire. But whatever happiness is Mine is due only to your association. It is not fitting for you to go away from this world and leave Me aside.

Haridas: My Lord! Do not create this illusion! Although I am so fallen, You must certainly show me this mercy. If an insignificant insect like myself dies, then what is the loss? My Lord, You are always affectionate towards Your devotees, and even though I am an imitation devotee, I pray that You will fulfill my desire.

Lord Chaitanya: It is now time for My noon duties. I will return tomorrow after seeing the Deity of Lord Jagannath in the temple. **(Lord Chaitanya embraces Haridas and then leaves)**

SCENE TWO

(Enter Lord Chaitanya with His devotees chanting and dancing. The chanting devotees circumambulate Haridas, and after a short time the *kirtan* stops and Lord Chaitanya sits down, surrounded by the devotees and with Haridas at His feet)

Lord Chaitanya: Haridas, what is the news?

Haridas: My Lord, whatever mercy You can bestow upon me!

Lord Chaitanya: Just see the super-excellent devotional qualities of Haridas Thakura! Due to his great humility, he will not enter the temple of Lord Jagannath for fear of creating a disturbance! Instead, he remains here in the flower garden, and from this humble abode he looks upon the *chakra* on top of Lord Jagannath's temple, and offers his obeisances from afar. In this way he lives – he worships Srimati Tulasi Devi, accepts a little of the Lord's *maha-prasada* and chants the Holy Name of the Lord 300,000 times every day without fail! Who can imitate such a thing? He is the *Namacharya*, the Teacher of the Holy Names, without doubt, and has been personally sent by the Supreme Lord to deliver the fallen souls of Kali-yuga. His chanting is pure and offenseless, and thus he is always relishing the nectar of pure love of Godhead.

Haridas is like a touchstone, for anyone who is fortunate enough to get his association will very quickly attain the lotus feet of Lord Krishna. Once, the envious Ramachandra Khan sent a prostitute to try and dishonor his character, but she could not

affect him. Instead, she became affected by his pure chanting and was blessed with the Lord's favor to engage in devotional service! Why, even Mayadevi herself could not disturb the mind of Thakura Haridas, which is constantly absorbed in thoughts of Sri Govinda. Because the Holy Name is always on his lips, he remains always meek and humble thus he has achieved the causeless mercy of the Lord. The waves of his good qualities are like those of the great *mahajanas* indeed, he is none other than Prahlada Maharaja himself!

Haridas's quality of forbearance is truly remarkable. The Muslim king had him beaten with canes in 22 market places, but Haridas did not even blink an eyelid! And who can forget his ecstatic dancing at the Lord's Ratha-yatra festival, which went on for hours and hours and filled the hearts of all the devotees with great wonder? My dear Haridas, there is no end to your transcendental qualities. You are certainly the topmost devotee of the Lord, and you are very dear to Me, remaining always in My heart. *Sri Haridas Thakura ki jai!!!*

Narrator: Haridas Thakura made Sri Chaitanya sit down in front of him. He fixed his eyes like two bumble-bees on the lotus face of the Lord, and held the lotus feet of the Lord on his heart. Then, taking the dust of the feet of all the devotees present, and putting it on his head, he began to chant the Holy Name of Sri Krishna Chaitanya, again and again. As he drunk the sweetness of the face of the Lord, tears constantly glided down from his eyes. In this way he gave up his life-air and left his body.

Assembled devotees: *Hari! Hari! Jai Sri Krishna! Haribol!*

Lord Chaitanya: (holding the body of Haridas Thakura in his arms) Being merciful upon Me, Krishna gave Me the association of Haridas Thakura! Being independent in His desires, the Lord has now broken that association. When Haridas wanted to leave this material world, it was not in My power to detain him. Simply by his own will he gave up his life exactly like Bhishma. Haridas Thakura was the crown-jewel on the head of this world! Without him, this world is now bereft of its most valuable gem! Anyone who has seen the festival of Sri Haridas Thakura's passing away will achieve the favor of Krishna very soon. Such is the wonderful power in seeing Haridas Thakura. ***(kirtan)*** *Namacharya Srila Haridas Thakura Ki Jai!!!*

The End